

CHAPTER 121  
BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

DISCUSSION: Criminal Investigations frequently involve background investigations of persons, particularly as they relate to white collar crime, organized crime, and vice activities. Additionally, the licensing of some businesses and persons requires background investigations. These investigations should be conducted discreetly and with special precautions. This chapter is not intended to include background investigations in the selection process for members of the Hattiesburg Police Department.

121.1.1 Initial Procedures

- A. Background investigations performed by Records personnel are authorized pursuant to statutory provisions in the licensing process. In criminal cases, the nature of the case, type of crime and association factors determine the sources used and the extent of the background investigation.
- B. Background investigations may be conducted only for legitimate and recognized law enforcement purposes, to include background checks conducted for licensing purposes.
- C. The Investigator conducting a background investigation must be cognizant of the purpose of the investigation. Investigations involving suspected criminal activity must be conducted with discretion in mind so as not to cause the target to conceal that activity.
- D. The Investigating Officer assigned to do a background investigation should first consider potential sources of information, both within and outside of the agency.
  - 1. Internal sources may include but are not limited to criminal history records, police records, and the knowledge of other Department employees.
  - 2. External sources may include but are not limited to informants, public records, criminal and motor vehicle records, and information developed through other means such as observation.
  - 3. Confidential sources include those documents such as medical records or bank records that may only be released by court order or permission granted by the subject on which the background investigation is performed.

121.1.2 Investigative Procedures

Consistent with the nature, scope, and purpose of the background investigation, actual investigation procedures shall be consistent with:

- A. Chapter 42.2.2 - Preliminary Investigations
- B. Chapter One (1) - Interviewing Witnesses

- C. Chapter 42.2.3 - Follow-up Investigations
- D. Chapter 43 - organized Crime and vice Investigations
- E. Chapter 42.2.10 - Informants

121.1.3 Use of Information Developed

- A. Use of Information collected during a background investigation shall be narrowly limited to the legitimate furtherance of law enforcement efforts against illegal activity or for other uses as prescribed and required by law.
- B. The Investigating Officer shall complete a report detailing all actions taken and information developed.
- C. The release of Department records of these investigations must be approved by Information Management and meet the criteria as specified in Chapter 82.